



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 27 February 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
27 FEBRUARY 1968

1. South Vietnam

With government forces pulled in to defend the cities, the Communists are making the most of the opportunity for a "recruiting" drive in rural areas.

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While the threat to the cities remains and elements of three enemy divisions are within striking distance of Saigon, there were no major initiatives overnight. Tan Son Nhut Air Base received seven rounds of rocket fire and allied positions elsewhere were fired on. In general, however, military action was light.

the Communists have nearly completed a road from the A Chau Valley that will link the Laotian corridor to the Hue area.

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2. Laos

Combat in the panhandle slackened yesterday with government forces still holding Attapeu and Saravane. Early this morning, however, the government unit at Attapeu reported it was again under attack.

3. Philippines

More aggressive and effective government patrolling is forcing the Huks to keep their heads down in central Luzon. Since the first of the year, there has been a marked decrease in such Huk activities as assassinations, "tax collecting," and recruiting. Some Huk bands are reported to have pulled out of their usual operating areas for reorganization.

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4. Egypt

For the first time Nasir is facing hostile demonstrations [redacted]

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[redacted] Protesting the "light" sentences given air force officers charged with negligence during the war, students rioted in Cairo Sunday. Nasir closed the universities. At the same time, however, the government announced the officers would be retried.

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Stiffer sentences might satisfy the unruly students, but they will not sit well with the military officers who already feel they have borne more than their share of blame for the June fiasco.

5. Greece-Turkey

Ankara and Athens continue to show an improving spirit of cooperation. Last Thursday the two governments announced they would begin talks on 11 March in an effort to extract some of the lesser thorns from their relationship. Cyprus, however, was specifically omitted from the agenda.

Cyprus is an issue to be handled separately. Both Greece and Turkey are in general agreement on another conference to be aimed at resolving their dispute. Makarios remains the unknown factor in this scenario.

6. Congo

[redacted]
[redacted] the Simba rebels may be nerving themselves up for another campaign [redacted]

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[redacted] Simba rampages in 1964 and 1965 taxed government forces severely and led to the importation of white mercenaries.

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7. Communist China

Despite calls from Peking urging
an end to factional fighting, it con-
tinues in China.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Communist Propaganda: The Communists are stepping up promotion abroad of the local "peace alliances" which they claim have sprung up in various South Vietnamese cities. The obscure Le Van Hao, head of the "Peace Alliance" in Hue, has reportedly addressed a letter to "heads of government" throughout the world, as well as to Secretary General U Thant, calling attention to a long list of alleged US atrocities in Hue in the past three weeks. The letter appeals for international support in getting the Americans out of South Vietnam.

The letter was broadcast over Liberation Radio on 23 February and focuses on Communist claims that the US has now completely destroyed one of the country's most historic cities. It makes the usual Communist exaggerations that large segments of the Hue population have already joined the "revolutionary armed forces" and that Hao's "revolutionary administration" includes defectors from Saigon's military, police, and government organizations.

As a propaganda move, the letter fits in with the current Hanoi diplomatic effort to plead the Communist cause in widely scattered world capitals.

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[redacted] Comments: [redacted]
 [redacted] bits and pieces
 of information about North Vietnam [redacted]
 [redacted] Much of what was
 said doubtless was designed to convince [redacted]
 [redacted] that Hanoi was ready to fight on indefinitely.

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[redacted] the country's popula-
 tion has been organized into small, self-sufficient
 groups to cope with a US invasion, if necessary.
 [redacted] individuals of combat age in the North were
 armed and would operate as guerrillas. Older men,
 women, and even children would provide back-up sup-
 port. The purpose of breaking down the country into
 small self-contained units is to enable each small
 unit to operate entirely on its own without cen-
 tral command.

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Although we have very little information about
 what specific steps the North Vietnamese have taken
 to set up so-called "combat villages," moves simi-
 lar to those described [redacted] have been dis-
 cussed in the government's press and radio for sev-
 eral years.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi Reports Antiwar Demonstrations: In its 26 February English language broadcast, Hanoi reported protests against the war at the US mission at the United Nations, at Harvard, and at Cambridge University in Great Britain. The broadcast reported that at the UN demonstration, representatives of many antiwar groups demanded an end to the war and quoted Dave Dellinger, one of the leaders of the peace movement, as declaring that the demonstration was aimed at a stronger mobilization of the "masses in the movement to protest the US war in Vietnam."

Other recent Hanoi statements have also given play to demonstrations against US policy in Vietnam which have occurred throughout Europe in the past several days.

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Hanoi on Wheeler Trip: Quoting a variety of Western press reports, a Hanoi broadcast beamed to South Vietnam on 25 February discusses General Wheeler's current trip to Vietnam. The broadcast alleges that the general went to Vietnam to gauge the "real situation" which is "alarming and runs counter to all the optimistic statements made by a number of US military officials at the end of 1967."

As for the objectives of Wheeler's trip, Hanoi alleges that he is primarily concerned with "boosting the morale of General Westmoreland and his clique," and will be making a comprehensive assessment of the military situation following the "general offensive and spontaneous uprisings of the Southern armed forces." According to the broadcast, Wheeler will also have to "settle contradictions" between Generals Westmoreland and Cushman. Finally, the Hanoi statement reports that the US has asked for the call-up of 50,000 reservists and increased the April draft call. This, Hanoi claims, indicates that the US "is still stubbornly pursuing the war of aggression" and warns that "no matter how many more troops Johnson may send to South Vietnam, all US military steps will certainly be crushed."

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